

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 01247 01 OF 02 211222Z

11
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 SR-02 ORM-01 /072 W
----- 127483

R 210825Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2611
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1247

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, EAID, LA
SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT

REF: STATE 032753

1. I HAD A LONG MEETING WITH FONMIN PHOUMI THIS MORNING. PHOUMI OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT HE HAD BEEN AT THE AIRPORT TO OBSERVE THE DEPARTURE OF REFUGEES. THE OPERATION WAS BEING CARRIED OUT VERY EFFICIENTLY BUT WITH ONLY THREE AIRCRAFT THE MOVEMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 40,000 PEOPLE WOULD BE LONG DRAWN OUT. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE REFUGEES ARRIVE IN TIME TO PLANT RICE AND THEREFORE HE WISHED TO ASK THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT.

2. I REPLIED THAT THIS REQUEST TOUCHED ON THE PURPOSE OF MY CALL. THE DEAN AFFAIR AND THE ATTITUDE TAKEN BY THE PATHET LAO WITH REGARD TO OUR SHOT DOWN HELICOPTER CAUSED ME GRAVE CONCERN. I HAD HAD THE FEELING, WHICH I BELIEVE HE SHARED, THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES HAD BEEN IMPROVING BUT THESE TWO SITUATIONS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 01247 01 OF 02 211222Z

TIONS SEEM TO ME TO BE A STEP BACKWARD. I DID NOT WISH TO LINK

DIRECTLY OUR POSITION WITH REGARD TO AIRCRAFT TO THESE TWO INCIDENTS, BUT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS REQUEST WOULD OBVIOUSLY BECOLORED BY THEM.

3. PHOUMI SAID THAT HE REGRETTED VERY MUCH THE DELAY IN OBTAINING INFORMATION ON DEAN. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT INSTEAD OF SENDING EMISSARIES TO SAM NEUA TO THE AREA IN WHICH THE BOYS HAD ALLEGEDLY BEEN CONFINED, OFFICIALS FROM THAT AREA HAD BEEN SUMMONED TO SAM NEUA. I REPLIED THAT THIS INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR TWO MONTHS AND IT SEEMED MOST EXTRAORDINARY THAT NO REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED.

4. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF THE HELICOPTER, PHOUMI SAID THAT THE VIENTIANE ACCORDS FORBADE THE RESUPPLYING OF FORCES IN ENCLAVES EXCEPT THROUGH ESTABLISHED CORRIDORS. FURTHERMORE, THE ACCORDS PROVIDED FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF SPECIAL FORCES AND FOR THE DEPARTURE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL. I SAID THAT NEITHER THE VIENTIANE SIDE NOR WE CONSIDERED THE AREAS IN WHICH OUR USAID HELICOPTER OPERATED TO BE ENCLAVES. THESE AIRCRAFT WERE ENGAGED IN REFUGEE RELIEF AND HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH SPECIAL FORCES OR MILITARY ACTIVITY. PHOUMI THEN CLAIMED THAT OUR HELICOPTER HAD ENTERED THE AIRSPACE OF A LIBERATED AREA. I REJOINED THAT NO DETERMINATION HAD BEEN MADE THAT THE BANKS OF THE NAM NGUM LAKE WERE "LIBERATED" AND IF THERE WERE PATHET LAO SOLDIERS THERE IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THIS CONSTITUTED AN ENCLAVE. PHOUMI REPLIED THAT ON THE CONTRARY THE PATRIOTIC FORCES IN THAT AREA WERE DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE LIBERATED ZONE AND THE WHOLE NORTH END OF THE NAM NGUM LAKE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PATHET LAO. I REPLIED THAT THIS DID NOT SEEM TO BE THE VIEW OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE.

5. PHOUMI SAID THAT MANY BRUTAL AND CRUEL EVENTS TOOK PLACE IN WARTIME AND THERE WAS INEVITABLY SOME BITTERNESS IN THE AFTERMATH. INDEED THE REFUGEES WITH WHOM HE HAD JUST TALKED COMPLAINED OF HAVING BEEN TAKEN FROM THEIR HOMES AT GUNPOINT BY VIENTIANE SIDE SOLDIERS WHEN THEY LEFT THE LIBERATED ZONE. THERE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH STRIFE AND BLOODSHED IN LAOS AND THE IMPORTANT THING WAS FOR BOTH SIDES TO WORK TOGETHER IN A SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 01247 01 OF 02 211222Z

6. PHOUMI THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT FEELINGS WERE RUNNING HIGH IN THE VIENTIANE SIDE WITH REGARD TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THAT CERTAIN HOTHEADS WERE TALKING AGAIN ABOUT A COUP. IN HIS VIEW, THE ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE DISSOLVED AT ONCE, AFTER WHICH WITHIN 90 DAYS SOME NEW BODY ON WHICH BOTH SIDES WOULD BE REPRESENTED WOULD BE CREATED. MEMBERS OF THE KING'S COUNCIL AND EVEN THE PRIME MINISTER WERE BEING THREATENED BY POLITICIANS WHO WERE UNWILLING TO GIVE UP THEIR PAY AND

PRIVILEGES. I SAID THAT THERE MIGHT WELL BE SOME HOTHEADS WHO WERE TALKING ABOUT COUPS BUT THAT I FAILED TO SEE HOW SUCH AN ADVENTURE COULD SUCCEED AND AS PHOUMI WELL KNEW, THE POSITION OF THE U.S. ON ADVENTURISM OF THIS KIND HAD BEEN MADE MANIFESTLY CLEAR. I SAID THAT THE CONCERN OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE APPEARED TO ME TO BE LESS A QUESTION OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY THAN OF REACHING AGREEMENT CONCURRENTLY ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE BODY WHICH WOULD SUCCEED IT. PHOUMI NOTED THAT THE ASSEMBLY WAS NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTH SIDES AND THAT ITS DISSOLUTION HAD BEEN AGREED TO LONG AGO BY THE GOVERNMENT AND BY THE KING. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD GIVEN ASSURANCES TO BOTH SIDES, AS WELL AS TO THE KING, THAT ANOTHER BODY WOULD BE CREATED IN WHICH BOTH SIDES WOULD BE REPRESENTED. THE ASSEMBLY HAD ALWAYS BEEN A THORN IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S FLESH AND MANY VIENTIANE SIDE POLITICIANS WERE EIWTERLY HOSTILE TO HIM. THE HISTORY OF LAOS HAD BEEN MARRED BY ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE PAST AND THESE COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. I SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD CONFIDED IN ME YESTERDAY THAT HE FELT SOMEWHAT IMPERILED.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 01247 02 OF 02 211128Z

11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 SR-02 ORM-01 /072 W

----- 126838

R 210825Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2612

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1247

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. PHOUMI THEN DEPLORED THE SMALL-MINDEDNESS OF POLITICIANS WHO REFUSED TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE MAJOR PROBLEMS WHICH FACE THE COUNTRY. HOW LONG, HE ASKED, COULD LAOS EXPECT TO LIVE AT

THE EXPENSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES. HE HAD MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLANNING BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT NO PLAN FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF LAOS EXISTED. IN MAKING THIS STATEMENT, HE WAS NOT SIGNLING OUT THE VIENTIANE SIDE AS WITHIN THE LIBERATED ZONE NO WELL-CONCEIVED PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN DRAWN UP. PHOUMI DIGRESSED AT LENGTH, AS HE HAS ON EARLIER OCCASIONS, ON THE THEME OF THE NECESSITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF LAOS TO GET TO WORK AND INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, DEVELOP THE LUMBER INDUSTRY, AND EXPLOIT THE SUB-SOIL WEALTH OF THE KINGDOM.

8. I TOLD PHOUMI THAT I AGREED WITH HIS CONCLUSIONS AND THAT THE WILLINGNESS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO SUPPORT LAOS AD INFINITUM WAS CLEARLY GOING TO DIMINISH. AT THIS TIME, THE KINGDOM ENJOYED FAR-FLUNG INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND THIS INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDE SHOULD BE URGENTLY EXPLOITED. THE RELUCTANCE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE AID WOULD CLEARLY INCREASE IF PROGRESS WAS NOT MADE TOWARD REUNIFYING THE COUNTRY AND RESOLVING THE BUDGETARY,
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 01247 02 OF 02 211128Z

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IT CONFRONTED. PHOUMI SAID THAT HE AGREED THE TIME WASNYHORT AND THAT HE EXPECTED THAT MEASURES SUCH AS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO ZONES AND A UNIFIED BUDGET AND CURRENCY WOULD BE ACHIEVED THIS YEAR. THE QUESTION OF ALLOWING FOREIGN EXPERTS TO VISIT THE LIBERATED ZONE WAS NOT A QUESTION OF SIMPLY GIVING THEM PERMISSION. ON THE CONTRARY, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO ASK THEM AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO COME SO THAT THE SENSIBLE INTEGRATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COULD TAKE PLACE. LAOS WAS POTENTIALLY RICH BUT THE GREED AND SELFISHNESS OF THE LAO WOULD HAVE TO BE OVERCOME. UNHAPPILY, IT APPEARED TO BE VERY MUCH A PART OF THE NATIONAL CHARACTER TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY AND TO SEEK MAXIMUM PERSONAL BENEFIT. HE SAID HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF LAOS.

9. I SAID TO PHOUMI THAT MANY ISSUES APPEAR TO BE EXACERBATED BY THE SUSPICION AND MISTRUST WITH WHICH EACH SIDE FACES THE OTHER. I CITED THE RECENT DECISION FOR A 50 MILLION KIP SUBSIDY OF THE PATRIOTIC FORCES, NOTING THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE BELIEVED THAT THIS SUM WOULD BE USED TO PAY PATHET LAO SOLDIERS TWICE AS MUCH AS FAR. OBVIOUSLY THIS CREATED AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. IT APPEARED TO ME TO BE ESSENTIAL THAT PARITY IN SALARIES BE ESTABLISHED AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF THE ARMED FORCES. PHOUMI DODGED THIS ISSUE AND ALLUDED TO THE NEED OF THE PATHET LAO FOR A SUBSIDY AND THE EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF GENERALS ENJOYING SPECIAL PRIVILEGES IN FAR. I SAID THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS BEING GIVEN FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PATHET LAO WHEN THE PATHET LAO CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL BUDGET WAS MINIMAL. PHOUMI AGREED BUT STATED THAT AID RECEIVED FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WAS BEING EVENLY DIVIDED.

10. PURSUING THE THEME OF FOREIGN AID, I STRESSED THAT WE WERE TRYING TO ACT IN A HELPFUL AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER. IT WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT EPISODES LIKE THE DEAN CASE AND THE HELICOPTER AFFAIR HAD THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE A SETBACK. PHOUMI SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO HELP RESOLVE ISSUES OF THIS KIND.

11. COMMENT: PHOUMI SEEMED GLAD TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TALK THINGS OVER AND KEPT THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR COOLING HIS HEELS FOR ABOUT AN HOUR WHILE WE CHATTED. I DON'T THINK HE EXPECTS ANY FURTHER RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT. IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 01247 02 OF 02 211128Z

THE DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE COUP, THERE WAS NO IMPLICATION THAT WE WOULD BE INVOLVED AND HE WAS OBLIQUELY ASKING FOR MY HELP IN KEEPING VIENTIANE SIDE EXTREMISTS IN LINE. I AM CONVINCED THAT HE REALIZES THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DEAN AFFAIR, BUT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO CONCEDE ANYTHING ON THE HELICOPTER. AS IS BEING REPORZID SEPTTEL, I BELIEVE I HAVE OBEYED THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS BUT WISH TO DROP IT NOW LEST WE CREATE A SITUATION WHICH COULD LEAD TO RESTRICTIONS ON OUR AIR OPERATIONS.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, DETENTION, TEXT ON MICROFILM ONLY, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, HELICOPTERS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI01247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: ACCESSION #D750062-0397 REMOVED FROM SYSTEM, DOCUMENT CONFIDENTIAL PER MEMO P900041-1889
Executive Order: OA 19960305 HARTUNG, KENNETH A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P900041-1890, D750062-0397
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750221/aaaaaszsz.tel
Line Count: 250
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: SECRET
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET; CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 32753, 75 STATE 032753
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <22 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, EAID, LA, DEAN, CHARLES, (PHOUMI VONGVICHIT), (DEAN, CHARLES)
To: STATE BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006